

CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE
Two Wealthy Farmers,
Or, the History of
MR. B R A G W E L L.
PART II.



Sold by S. HAZARD,
Printer to the CHEAP REPOSITORY for Religious
and Moral Tracts; at BATH;

By J. MARSHALL,
Printer to the CHEAP REPOSITORY, No. 17,
Queen-Street, Cheap-Side, and No. 4, Aldermanry
Church Yard; and R. WHITE, Piccadilly, LO-
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THE

Two Wealthy Farmers, &c.

PART II.

MY readers may remember that the first part of this history concluded with a walk taken by Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy over the grounds of the latter, in which walk Mr. Bragwell, though he seemed to admire, took care to lower every thing he saw, by comparing it with something better which he had of his own. Soon after supper Mrs. Worthy left the room with her daughters, at her husband's desire; for it was his intention to speak more plainly to Bragwell than was likely to be agreeable to him before others.

The two farmers being seated at their little table, each in a handsome old fashioned great chair, Bragwell began.

It is a great comfort, neighbour Worthy at a certain time of life to be got above the world; my notion is, that a man should labour hard the first part of his days and that he may then sit down and enjoy himself for the remainder. Now though I hate boasting, yet as you are my oldest friend I am about to open my heart to you. Let me tell you then I reckon I have worked as hard as any man in my time, and that I now begin to think I have a right to indulge a

little. I have got my money with a good character and I mean to spend it with credit. I pay every one his own, I set a good example, I keep to my church, I serve GOD, I honour the king, and I obey the laws of the land.

This is doing a great deal indeed, replied Mr. Worthy, but added he I doubt that more goes to the making up all these duties than men are commonly aware of. Suppose then that you and I talk the matter over coolly, we have the evening before us. What if we sit down together as two friends and examine one another.

Bragwell who loved an argument and who was not a little vain both of his sense and his morality, accepted the challenge, and gave his word that he would take in good part any thing that should be said to him. Worthy was about to proceed when Bragwell interrupted him for a moment, by saying,—But stop friend, before we begin I wish you would remember that we have had a long walk, and I want a little refreshment; have you no liquor that is stronger than this cider? I am afraid it will give me a fit of the gout.

Mr. Worthy immediately produced a bottle of wine and another of spirits, saying that though he drank neither spirits nor even wine himself, yet his wife always kept a little of each as a provision in case of sickness or accidents.

Farmer Bragwell preferred the brandy, and began to taste it. Why, said he, this is no better than English, I always use foreign myself. I bought this for foreign, said Mr. Worthy. No no, it is English spirits I assure you, but I can put you into a way to get foreign nearly as cheap as English. Mr. Worthy replied that he thought that was impossible.

Bragwell. O no, there are ways and means—a word to the wife—there is an acquaintance of mine that lives upon the south coast—you are a particular friend and I will get you a gallon for a trifle.

Worthy. Not if it be smuggled Mr. Bragwell, though I should get it for six-pence a bottle.—Ask no questions, said the other, I never say any thing to any one and who is the wiser? And so this is your way of obeying the laws of the land, said Mr. Worthy—here is a fine specimen of your morality.

Bragwell. Come, come, don't make a fuss about trifles. If *every one* did it indeed it would be another thing, but as to my getting a drop of good brandy cheap, why that can't hurt the revenue much.

Worthy. Pray Mr. Bragwell what should you think of a man who would dip his hand into a bag and take out a few guineas?

Bragwell. Think! why I think that he should be hanged to be sure.

Worthy. But suppose that bag stood in the king's treasury ?

Bragwell. In the king's treasury ! worse and worse ! What, rob the king's treasury. Well I hope the robber will be taken up and executed, for I suppose we shall all be taxed to pay the damage.

Worthy. Very true. If one man takes money out of the treasury others must be obliged to pay the more into it ; but what think you if the fellow should be found to have stopped some money *in its way* to the treasury, instead of taking it out of the bag after it got there.

Bragwell. Guilty, Mr. Worthy, it is all the same in my opinion. If I was a jury-man, I should say guilty, death.

Worthy. Hark'ye Mr. Bragwell, he that deals in smuggled brandy, is the man who takes to himself the king's money in its way to the treasury, and he as much robs the government as if he dipt his hands into a bag of guineas in the treasury chamber. It comes to the same thing exactly. Here Bragwell seemed a little offended. What Mr. Worthy; do you pretend to say I am not an honest man because I like to get my brandy as cheap as I can ? and because I like to save a shilling to my family ? Sir, I repeat it, I do my duty to God and my neighbour.—I say the Lord's prayer most days, I go to church on sundays, I repeat my creed and keep the ten commandments,

and though I may now and then get a little brandy cheap, yet upon the whole, I will venture to say, I do as much as can be expected of any man.

Worthy. Come then, since you say you keep the commandments, you cannot be offended if I ask you whether you understand them.

Bragwell. To be sure I do. I dare say I do, lookee Mr. Worthy, I don't pretend to much reading, I was not bred to it as you were. If my father had been a parson I fancy I should have made as good a figure as some other folks, but I hope good sense and *a good heart* may teach a man his duty without much scholarship.

Worthy. To come to the point let now go through the ten commandments, and let us take along with us those explanations of them which our Saviour gave us in his sermon on the mount.

Bragwell. Sermon on the mount! why the ten commandments are in the 20th chapter of Exodus. Come, come, Mr. Worthy, I know where to find the commandments as well as you do, for it happens that I am church-warden, and I can see from the altar piece where the ten commandments are without your telling me, for my pew directly faces it.

Worthy. But I advise you to read the

fermon on the mount, that you may see the full meaning of them.

Bragwell. What do you want to make me believe that there are two ways of keeping the commandments?

Worthy. No; but there may be two ways of understanding them.

Bragwell. Well; I am not afraid to be put to the proof, I defy any man to say I do not keep at least all the four first that are on the left side of the altar piece.

Worthy. If you can prove that, I shall be more ready to believe you observe those of the other table, for he who does his duty to God will be likely to do his duty to his neighbour also.

Bragwell. What! do you think that I serve two Gods? Do you think then that I make graven images, and worship rocks or stones? Do you take me for a Papist or an Idolater?

Worthy. Don't triumph quite so soon master Bragwell. Pray is there nothing in the world you prefer to God, and thus make an idol of? Do you not love your money, or your lands, or your crops, or your cattle, or your own will, and your own way, rather better than you love God? Do you never think of these with more pleasure than you think of Him, and follow them more eagerly than your religious duty?

Bragwell. O there's nothing about that in the 20th Chapter of Exodus.

Worthy. But Jesus Christ has said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Now it is certainly a man's duty to love his father and mother, nay it would be wicked not to love them, and yet we must not love even these more than our Creator and our Saviour. Well I think on this principle, your heart pleads guilty to the breach of the first and second commandments, let us proceed to the third.

Bragwell. That is about swearing, is it not?

Mr. Worthy, who had observed Bragwell guilty of much profaneness in using the name of his Maker, (though all such offensive words have been avoided in writing this history) now told him that he had been waiting the whole day for an opportunity to reprove him, for his frequent breach of the third commandment.

Good L—d, I break the third commandment, said Bragwell, no indeed hardly ever. I once used to swear a little to be sure, but I vow to G—d I never do it now except now and then, when I happen to be in a passion: and in such a case, why good G—d you know the sin is with those who provoke me and not with me, but upon my soul I don't think I have sworn an oath these three months, no not I faith, as I hope to be saved.

Worthy. And yet you have broken this

holy law no less than five or six times in the last speech you have made.

Bragwell. Lord bless me. Sure you mistake. Good heavens Mr. Worthy, I call G—d to witness I have neither cursed nor swore since I have been in the house.

Worthy. Mr. Bragwell, this is the way in which many who call themselves very good sort of people deceive themselves. What! is it no profanation of the name of God to use it lightly, irreverently, and familiarly as you have done? Our Saviour has not only told us not to swear by the immediate name of God, but he has said, swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth, and in order to prevent our inventing any other irreligious exclamations or expressions, he has even added, but let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than this simple affirmation and denial cometh of evil.

Bragwell. Well, well. I must take a little more care I believe, I vow to heaven I did not know there had been so much harm in it, but my daughters seldom speak without using some of these words, and yet they wanted to make me believe the other day that it was monstrous vulgar to swear.

Worthy. Women, even gentlewomen, who ought to correct this evil habit in their fathers, and husbands, and children, are too apt to encourage it by their own practice. And indeed they betray the profaneness of

their own minds also by it, for none who truly venerate the holy name of God, can either profane it in this manner themselves, or hear others do so without being exceedingly pained at it.

Bragwell. Well, since you are so hard upon me I believe I must e'en give up this point—so let us pass on to the next, and here I tread upon sure ground, for as sharp as you are upon me, you can't accuse me of being a sabbath-breaker, since I go to church every funday of my life, unless on some very extraordinary occasion.

Worthy. For those occasions the gospel allows, by saying, "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath." Our own sickness or attending on the sickness of others are lawful impediments.

Bragwell. Yes, and I am now and then obliged to look at a drove of beasts, or to go a journey, or to take some medicine, or perhaps some friend may call upon me, or it may be very cold, or very hot, or very rainy.

Worthy. Poor excuses Mr. Bragwell, I am afraid these will not pass on the day of judgment. But how is the rest of your fundays spent?

Bragwell. O why I assure you, I often go to church in the afternoon also, and even if I am ever so sleepy.

Worthy. And so you finish your nap at church I suppose.

Bragwell. Why as to that to be sure we do contrive to have something a little nicer than common for dinner on a funday; in consequence of which one eats you know a little more than ordinary; and having nothing to do on that day, one has more leisure to take a cheerful glafs; and all these things will make one a little heavy you know.

Worthy. And don't you take a little ride in the morning, and look at your sheep when the weather is good, and so fill your mind just before you go to church with the thoughts of them, and when you come away again don't you settle an account, or write a few letters of busines?

Bragwell. I can't say but I do, but that is nothing to any body as long as I set a good example by keeping to my church.

Worthy. And how do you pass your funday evenings?

Bragwell. My wife and daughters go a visiting of a funday afternoon. My daughters are glad to get out at any rate, and as to my wife, she says, that being ready dresed it is a pity to lose the opportunity, besides it saves her time on a week day; so then you see I have it all my own way, and when I have got rid of the ladies, who are ready to faint at the smell of tobacco, I can venture to smoak a pipe and drink a sober glafs of punch with half a dozen friends.

Worthy. Which punch being made of smuggled brandy, and drunk on the Lord's day in very vain, as well as profane and worldly company, you are enabled to break both the law of God and that of your country at a stroke: and I suppose when you are got together, you speak of your cattle or of your crops, after which perhaps you talk over a few of your neighbours faults, and then you brag a little of your own wealth or your own achievements.

Bragwell. Why you seem to know us so well, that any one would think you had been sitting behind the curtain, and yet you are a little mistaken too, for I think we have hardly said a word for several of our last fundays on any thing but politics.

Worthy. And do you find that you improve your Christian charity by that subject.

Bragwell. Why to be sure we do quarrel till we are very near fighting, that is the worst on't.

Worthy. And then you call names and swear a little I suppose.

Bragwell. Why when one is contradicted and put in a passion you know, flesh and blood can't bear it.

Worthy. And when all your friends are gone home, what becomes of the rest of the evening?

Bragwell. That is just as it happens, sometimes I read the newspaper; and as

one is generally most tired on the days one does nothing, I go to bed earlier than on other days, that I may be more fit to get up to my busines the next morning.

Worthy. So you shorten sunday as much as you can, by cutting off a bit at both ends I suppose, for I take it for granted, you lie a little later in the morning.

Bragwell. Come, come. We shan't get through the whole ten to night if you stand snubbing one at this rate. You may pass over the fifth, for my father and mother have been dead since I was a boy, so I am clear of that scrape.

Worthy. There are however many relative duties in that commandment ; unkindness to all kindred is forbidden.

Bragwell. O if you mean my turning off my nephew Tom, the plowboy, you must not blame me for that, it was all my wife's fault. He was as good a lad as ever lived to be sure, and my own brother's son, but my wife could not bear that a boy in a carter's frock should be about the house who called her aunt. We quarrelled like dog and cat about it; and when he was turned away we did not speak for a week.

Worthy. Which was a fresh breach of the commandment, a worthy nephew turned out of doors, and a wife not spoken to for a week, are no very convincing proofs of your observance of the fifth commandment.

Bragwell. Well I long to come to the sixth, for you don't think I commit murder I hope.

Worthy. I am not sure of that.

Bragwell. What kill any body ?

Worthy. Why the laws of the land indeed and the disgrace attending it are almost enough to keep any man from actual murder; let me ask however, do you never give way to unjust anger, and passion, and revenge ? as for instance, do you never feel your resentment kindle against some of the politicians who contradict you on a sunday night ? and do you never push your animosity against somebody that has affronted you, further than the occasion will justify ?

Bragwell. Harkee Mr. Worthy, I am a man of substance, and nobody shall offend me without my being even with him. So as to injuring a man, if he affronts me first, there's nothing but good reason in that.

Worthy. Very well! only bear in mind that you wilfully break this commandment, whether you abuse your servant, are angry at your wife, watch for a moment to revenge an injury on your neighbour, or even wreak your passion on a harmless beast ; for you have then the seeds of murder working in your breast ; and if there were no law, no gibbet to check you, and no fear of disgrace neither, I am not sure where you would stop.

Bragwell. Why Mr. Worthy you have

a strange way of explaining the commandments, so you set me down for a murderer merely because I bear hatred to a man who has done me a hurt, and am glad to do him a like injury in my turn.—I am sure I should want spirit if I did not.

Worthy. I go by the scripture rule, which says, “ he that hateth his brother is a murderer,” and again, “ love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Besides, Mr. Bragwell, you made it a part of your boast that you said the Lord’s prayer every day, wherein you pray to God to forgive you your trespasses as you forgive them that trespass against you.—If therefore you do not forgive them that trespass against you, in that case, you pray daily that your own trespasses may never be forgiven.

Bragwell. Well, come let us make haste and get through these commandments. The next is, “ thou shalt not commit adultery,” thank God neither I nor my family can be said to break the seventh commandment.

Worthy. Here again, remember how Christ himself hath said, whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. These are no far fetched expressions of mine, Mr. Bragwell, they are the words of Jesus Christ. I hope you will not charge him with having carried things too far, for if you do, you

charge him with being mistaken in the religion he taught, and this can only be accounted for by supposing him an impostor.

Bragwell. Why upon my word, Mr. Worthy, I don't like these sayings of his, which you quote upon me so often, and that is the truth of it, and I can't say I feel much disposed to believe them.

Worthy. I hope you believe in Jesus Christ. I hope you believe that creed of yours, which you also boasted of your repeating so regularly.

Bragwell. Well, well. I'll believe anything you say rather than stand quarrelling with you.

Worthy. I hope then you will allow, that since it is committing adultery to look at a woman with even an irregular thought, it follows from the same rule, that all immodest dress in your daughters, or indecent jests and double meanings in yourself, all loose songs or novels, and all diversions also which have a like dangerous tendency, are forbidden by the seventh commandment; for it is most plain from what Christ has said, that it takes in not only the act but the inclination, the desire, the indulged imagination; the act is only the last and highest degree of any sin, the topmost round as it were of a ladder, to which all the lower rounds are only as so many steps and stages.

Bragwell. Strict indeed, Mr. Worthy,

but let us get on to the next, you won't pretend to say *I steal.* Mr. Bragwell I trust was never known to rob on the highway, to break open his neighbour's house, or to use false weights or measures.

Worthy. No, nor have you ever been under any temptation to do it, and yet there are a thousand ways of breaking the eighth commandment besides actual stealing, for instance, do you never hide the faults of the goods you sell, and heighten the faults of those you buy? Do you never take advantage of an ignorant dealer, and ask more for a thing than it is worth? Do you never turn the distressed circumstances of a man, who has something to sell, to your own unfair benefit, and thus act as unjustly by him as if you had stolen? Do you never cut off a shilling from a workman's wages, under a pretence which your conscience can't justify? Do you never pass off an unsound horse, for a found one? Do you never conceal the real rent of your estate from the overseers, and thereby rob the poor rates of their legal due?

Bragwell. Pooh! these things are done every day. I shan't go to set up for being better than my neighbours in these sort of things, these little matters will pass muster.—I don't set up for a reformer.—If I am as good as the rest of my neighbours, no man can call me to account; I'm not worse I trust, and I don't pretend to be better.

Worthy. You must be tried hereafter at the bar of God, and not by a jury of your fellow-creatures; and the scriptures are given us, in order to shew by what rule we shall be judged. How many or how few, do as you do, is quite aside from the question; Jesus Christ, has even told us to strive to enter in at the *strait gate*, so that we ought rather to take fright, from our being like the common run of people, than to take comfort from our being so.

Bragwell. Come, I don't like all this dose work—it makes a man feel I don't know how—I don't find myself so happy as I did—I don't like this fishing in troubled waters—I'm as merry as a grig when I let these things alone—I'm glad we are got to the ninth. But I suppose I shall be lugged in there too head and shoulders. Any one who did not know me, would really think I was a great sinner, by your way of putting things; I don't bear false witness however.

Worthy. You mean, I suppose, you would not swear away a man's life falsely before a magistrate, but do you take equal care not to slander or backbite him? Do you never represent a good action of a man you have quarrelled with, as if it were a bad one? or do you never make a bad one worse than it is, by your manner of telling it? even when you invent no false circum-

stance, do you never give such a colour, to those you relate, as to leave a false impression on the mind of the hearers? Do you never twist a story so as to make it tell a little better for yourself, and a little worse for your neighbour, than truth and justice warrant,

Bragwell. Why as to that matter, all this is only natural.

Worthy. Aye much too natural to be right I doubt. Well now we are got to the last of the commandments.

Bragwell. Yes, I have run the gauntlet finely through them all, you will bring me in guilty here I suppose, for the pleasure of going through with it, for you condemn without judge or jury, master Worthy.

Worthy. The culprit I think has hitherto pleaded guilty to the evidence brought against him. The tenth commandment however, goes to the root and principle of evil, it dives to the bottom of things, this command checks the first rising of sin in the heart, teaches us to strangle it in the birth as it were, before it breaks out in those acts which are forbidden: as for instance, every man covets before he proceeds to steal, nay many covet who dare not steal, lest they should suffer for it.

Bragwell. Why lookee, Mr. Worthy, I don't understand these new fashioned explanations; one should not have a grain of

sheer goodness left, if every thing one does is to be frittered away at this rate, I am not, I own, quite so good as I thought, but if what you say were true, I should be so miserable, I should not know what to do with myself. Why, I tell you, all the world may be said to break the commandments at this rate.

Worthy. Very true. All the world, and I myself also, are but too apt to break them, if not in the letter at least in the spirit of them. Why then all the world are (as the scripture expresses it) " guilty before God." And if guilty they should own they are guilty, and not stand up and justify themselves as you do, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Well, according to my notion, I am a very honest man, and honesty is the sum and substance of all religion say I.

Worthy. All truth, honesty, justice, order and obedience, grow out of the christian religion. The true christian acts, at all times and on all occasions, from the pure and spiritual principle of love to God; on this principle, he is upright in his dealings, true to his word, kind to the poor, helpful to the oppressed. In short, if he truly "loves God," he must "do justice" and can't help, loving mercy. Christianity is a uniform consistent thing. It does not allow us to make up for the breach of one part of God's law, by our strictness in ob-

serving another. There is no sponge in one's duty, that can wipe out the spot of another's sin.

Bragwell. Well but at this rate, I it should be always puzzling and blundering, and should never know for certain whether I was right or not, whereas I am now quite satisfied with myself, and have no doubts to torment me.

Worthy. One way of knowing whether we really desire to obey the whole law of God is this; when we find we have as great a regard to that part of it, the breach of which does not touch our own interest as to that part which does. For instance, a man robs me; I am in a violent passion with him, and when it is said to me, "doest thou well to be angry?" I answer, "I do well." *Thou shalt not steal* is a law of God, and this fellow has broken that law. Aye, but says conscience. 'tis thy own property which is in question.—He has broken thy hedge—he has stolen thy sheep—he has taken thy purse. Art thou therefore sure whether it is his violation of thy property, or of God's law which provokes thee? I will put a second case—I hear another swear most grievously: or I meet him coming drunk out of an alehouse; or I find him singing a loose prophane song. If I am not as much grieved for this blasphemer, or this drunkard, as I was for the robber; if I do not take the

n one same pains to bring him to a sense of his sin, other which I did to bring the robber to justice, "how dwelleth the love of God in me?" Is it not clear that I value my own sheep more than God's commandments? That I prize my purse more than I love my Maker? In quite short, whenever I find out that I am more jealous for my own property than for God's law; more careful about my own reputation than his honour, I always suspect I am got upon wrong ground, and that even my right notions are not proceeding from a right principle.

as to *Bragwell*. Why what in the world would a man you have me to do?

with *Worthy*. You must confess that your sins *are* sins. You must not merely call them sins, while you see no guilt in them; but you must confess them so as to hate and detest them: so as to be habitually humbled under the sense of them; so as to trust for salvation not in your freedom from them, but in the mercy of a Saviour; and so as to make it the chief business of your life to contend against them, and in the main to forsake them. And remember that if you seek for a deceitful gaiety, rather than a well grounded cheerfulness, if you prefer a false security to final safety, and now go away to your cattle and your Farm, and dismiss the subject from your thoughts lest it should make you uneasy; I am not sure that this

simple discourse may not appear against you at the day of account, as a fresh proof that you "loved darkness rather than light" and so increase your condemnation.

Mr. Bragwell was more affected than he cared to own. He went to bed with less spirits and more humility than usual. He did not however care to let Mr. Worthy see the impression which it had made upon him; but at parting next morning, he shook him by the hand more cordially than usual, and made him promise to return his visit in a short time.

What befel Mr. Bragwell and his family on his going home, may perhaps make the subject of a future history.

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